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MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

IN a recapitulation of the passing events of the month, and a short survey of our domestic situation the most prominent event as more nearly affecting our immediate interest may be reckoned the present difficulties in the commercial world, arising from the numerous and extensive failures, which have occurred both in Great Britain and Ireland, not from any local cause, not because by the Union two legislatures have merged into one, and instead of a separate parliament, respecting which, while it had an existence, little good, judging from their deeds, could be said, we now form a portion of the imperial parliament, of which we feel no inclination to speak in terms of praise; but these overtrainings in trade have arisen from a cause common to every part of the empire, and which will not cease to operate, so long as the present unwise policy is persisted in.—All these evils result from the war. But as this part of the subject will be treated more fully in the Commercial Report, it is unnecessary to enter more largely on it in this place. If war occasion all the inconveniences, the remedy must be sought in peace. It is a fashionable cant to say peace is unattainable, and the expression passes from one to another without examination. A war of fifteen years has not given us security, but every successive year has increased our danger. Let us try an opposite system. The gigantic power of France is as greatly to be dreaded in war, as in peace, and there is no tendency in warfare to recruit our most vulnerable part, the state of our finances, or to restore the lost energies of trade, which can alone enable these countries to bear the present load of taxation. Let Great Britain abate of her haughty pretensions to the dominion of the

seas, and resolve to be just and moderate, and a peace might speedily be made. Even admitting doubts of its long duration, our situation could not be made worse by the experiment. At least, suffering humanity would have a little respite, and the blood and treasure of our country would not for a time be unavailingly lost in a contest in which nothing is gained, and much is suffered. Peace could probably be made on terms by no means unreasonable: it would be useful to Bonaparte to consolidate his power; we equally require its aid to restore our energies. In a season of peace, our commerce would revive, and from this source we should possess an ample equivalent for the increased military power of France. In trade she cannot rival us for many years.

In Ireland additional taxes have been laid on, and much murmur occasioned. How the advocates for war can reasonably complain, is not quite evident. So long as war is carried on, expenses will increase, and there must be additional taxation. The clamorous supporters of war should bear these facts in remembrance, and cease to object to taxation, while their own system renders it absolutely necessary. If these considerations had due weight, perhaps many who sit quietly at home, and loudly raise the war-whoop, would abate of their brainless ardour. But perhaps no persons are more dissatisfied with the weight of taxes, than they who are so anxious to assume an exclusive claim to the abused and misapplied term of loyalty. These seeming contradictions arise from the same motive, an inordinate selfishness. They seek to draw a gain from a monopoly of specious pretences, but they like to save their pockets. They are willing

to give their support in words, but chuse rather that others should give money, and scruple not by every artifice to evade their proportion of contribution to what they themselves affect to call a just and necessary war.

Some of the London clergy have been holding meetings in their parishes, and accusing reformers of promoting dissention; but are not they themselves liable to a just recrimination? Do they not promote dissention by their counter resolutions? An opposition to existing establishments must be either good, or bad, according to the motives of the opposers, and the good or bad qualities of the things opposed. No party whether in power, or out of power, has a right to assume without examination, that an opposition to them must necessarily be bad. The question must be determined by reason, and sound argument. An obstinate zeal for retention may be as unreasonable, and as liable to produce irritation and inflammation, as a zeal for innovation.

The necessity for taxes in Ireland was increased by the injudicious and immoral policy of abating the duty on whiskey. But may it not be considered in the nature of a bribe to secure the landed interest, that the cheapness of the poison of ardent spirits is permitted to increase *our national vice*, and that fondness for intoxication which is unhappily characteristic of our country?

The manufacturers of Dublin are in great distress. If their employers have felt the pressure of the times, the poor weaver and artisan accustomed to live from hand to mouth have felt the difficulties with accumulated weight. The one may have to part with some of their superfluities, and ascend to the third story, or even to the garret, but what must become of the wretched inhabitants of the cellar, when their weekly or daily fund to feed themselves and their crying infants, is taken from them by the distresses of the times. They were already in a state in which they could sink no lower, without actually encountering starvation. But there is a radical defect in the state of Dublin. A large city is not a suitable seat of manufacture. In such

an unnatural situation, seasons of distress frequently occur, and periodically visit those victims of bad policy, and of their own imprudence, in whom thoughtless habits of improvidence are cherished, not only by their own fatal propensity to drinking whiskey, but by the blunders of statesmen, and especially by that system, to which they have been taught to look for relief. Instead of relying on their own powers, and being instructed in the necessity of providing for their wants by their own exertions, and by prudence and frugality, they are accustomed to look for assistance from the uncertain supplies of charity balls, and charity plays, mere palliatives, which increased the evils by teaching dependence on the supplies drawn from the luxuries of those above them. Government in the present instance have stepped forward, and procured the national bank to offer to lend £200,000, as a means of supporting public credit. The intention is good, but there is reason to fear the means are entirely inadequate to the end proposed of affording effectual relief. The present pressure arises from too large a stock of manufactures lying on hand. The plan of giving money to the manufacturers to enable them to go on increases the stock, and adds to the evil.

The common council of the city of Dublin have at a meeting on the 20th instant passed by a large majority, resolutions to the following import, but the court of Aldermen refused their concurrence.

“Resolved. That we now feel as we have always felt, an unshaken loyalty to our sovereign king George the third, and the succession of his royal house; and we have to lament that his majesty should have been so grossly imposed on by his ministers, as in terminating the last sessions of parliament to state the growing prosperity of Ireland, when his ministers, in making such representations to his majesty, must have known that the very reverse was and is the fact.

“Resolved. That the present distress and growing misfortunes of Ireland have arisen from not having a resident parliament, who alone would be capable of knowing the real wants of this country, and providing for them adequate remedies, and we are the more fortified in this our opinion by the manner in which the late

monstrous system of taxation was imposed on this country, and which is contrary to every sound principle of legislation, we therefore appeal to our countrymen and fellow citizens to come forward in corporate bodies, and in county and grand jury meetings, to demand a restoration of that constitution which is our birth-right, and of which we have been dispossessed by fraud and corruption."

They have likewise ordered the portrait of Mr. Foster to be removed from the mansion house, he having forfeited the confidence of the nation. If cool reflection had repressed the ebullitions of party, it is probable this portrait would never have been placed in the situation from which it is now displaced.

The first resolution conveys a merited censure on the conduct of ministers for grossly misrepresenting the state of Ireland, and assuming its growing prosperity in opposition to the facts demonstrated by woeful experience within the last few months, and shows a proper return of public spirit in the corporation of the city. All agree that something is wrong, but in the opinion of some the evil is still more deeply seated, than as arising from the union. Whether this measure was good or bad in itself, the means by which it was brought about, will stamp disgrace upon the actors in the page of history. Never was greater political profligacy, or a more total disregard to all principle manifested, than on that occasion. The bribers, and the bribed, and the *hollow* opposers of this measure are involved in one common infamy. But if the common council of Dublin are disposed to investigate fully the causes of our commercial distress, and the weight of taxation, they must look further than the union. The cause will be found in the *war*. But probably they are not prepared for so strong a censure on administration, as the true solution of such a question would produce.

It is a symptom of bad times, when scarcely a month passes in which we have not to allude to some fresh instance of suffering in the cause of the people, and of free inquiry. While speculators escape, and those who have been long living on the public spoils, are left at quiet, while the pensioners of the state, the holders of sinecure places, and they who receive

enormous salaries for doing little, enjoy their gains, which so heavily load the middle and lower classes, as to threaten that "the additional pound put on, may at last break the pack horse's back," while those public mendicants of the higher rank loll at ease, supported by a forced and extravagant maintenance, if an unlucky wight vents his feelings in terms too strong for the nerves of pampered and morbid delicacy, he is immediately caught in the legal trap, and the utmost stretch of power is exerted against him; while to the shame of the people be it told, they look coldly on, say in thoughtless apathy he has been too imprudent, and join with the satellites of power in all their aggravations against the object of ministerial vengeance. The herd ungenerously forsake the stricken deer. We have again and again to complain of the *ingratitude* of the country; it is extremely bad policy to leave unsupported those who step forward as the advocates of the rights of the people; it tends to discourage others from coming forward in the public service, when they see such indifference and apathy, and suggests the inquiry, where will be the virtuous recompense to serve an *ungrateful people*? The feeling of conscious rectitude may support a few generous spirits in sacrificing much to the public good, but there is in the human mind a tendency to grow cool and indifferent also, unless the approbation of numbers cherishes the patriotic flame. It is not to be expected, that individuals can neglect their own business to make a common cause with the sufferer; but he is fairly entitled to the expression of sympathy, so decidedly made known as to render such prosecutions unpopular. Liberty is in danger of being lost, if the press is shackled, and free discussion so narrowed, that a man must write, as if the attorney general "overlooked each line." The free expression of thought will be cramped if advantage is taken of an unguarded word: which in the hurry or ardour of composition may slip in, and he who writes with a sword suspended over his head, will seldom possess sufficient strength of mind to write usefully or energetically. The press

may issue forth tame mawkish lullabies, or venally sing the praises of those in power; but under such circumstances, the shadow only of a mighty name will remain.

These reflections are preparatory to the introduction of the case of William Cobbett, the well known writer of the *Weekly Register*; a man who at present, at least, deserves well of his country. He has been found guilty of a libel on the German legion, and sentenced to an imprisonment of two years in Newgate, to pay a fine of £1000, and afterwards to find securities for his good behaviour for seven years, himself in £3000, and two securities for £1000 each. We are to recollect that he himself was a soldier, who rose from the ranks, and has that warmth of feeling which may reasonably be expected, under such circumstances, when he described the German Legion called in to quell a meeting of the local militia at Ely. Indeed in a fair estimate of his political principles, a bias to his first profession, and a fondness for military glory appear to lead him at times, to countenance that system of military power, to which the present unhappy state of Europe appears in danger of rapidly propelling the present civilized portion of the globe, and of bringing it back again to the barbarism of those falsely called the heroic ages. These remarks on the tendency to military despotism incidentally occurred, and have no immediate bearing on the question of his punishment, for on this point he and the attorney general have probably a similar predilection. He is now deserving of public sympathy: and that support conferred by public feeling. He shows an undaunted mind, and that his spirit is unbroken, appears by the following extract from his *Register* of the 14th inst.

"I begin the eighteenth volume in a prison. In this respect, however, I only share the lot of many men, who have inhabited this very prison before me, nor have I the smallest doubt, that I shall hereafter be enabled to follow the example of those men. On the triumphing, the boundless joy, the feasting and shouting, of the speculators, or public robbers, and of all those, whether prodigate or hypocritical villains, of whom I have been the

scourge, I look with contempt; knowing very well, feeling in my heart, that my situation, even at this time, is infinitely preferable to theirs; and, as to the future, I can reasonably promise myself days of peace and happiness, while continual dread must haunt their guilty minds; while every stir, and every sound must make them quake for fear. *Their day is yet to come.*

He has been charged with base lucre. In the present state of things, the advocate of the people does not take the shortest road to make his fortune. The people have no places or pensions to bestow; they are even so careless as to be niggardly in dispensing the due meed of praise to their defenders. The managers of the press seek out other means; they too frequently frame their columns to suit the varying fashion of opinion, and by the help of deceptive glosses, and artful suppressions, seek to make "the worse appear the better reason," and thus recommend themselves to the notice of government; they are in no fear of prosecutions, or of "being caught tripping."

"They would not with a peremptory tone,

Assert the nose upon the face their own," if they thought it would displease their superiors, or lessen the number of their subscribers, when loyalty, or rather a pretence to it, is the reigning fashion. The proprietors and editors of our periodical publications have much in their power in giving a right or wrong direction to the public taste; they are caterers for the public, who are often too indolent to judge for themselves, but without discrimination take what is set before them:

"While sloth seduces most, too weak to bear,

The unsupportable fatigue of thought,
And swallowing, therefore, without pause
or choice,

The total grist unsifted, husks and all."

The managers of the press, including authors, proprietors, and all others in their respective stations should act on principle. He who says what he does not think, or suppresses from interested motives, lest the sale of a work may be injured, or the number of subscribers lessened, is actuated

by *base lucre*, while Cobbett, and they who unaidedly publish unwelcome, unpalatable, but useful truths, stand acquitted of the charge which recoils on the heads of those who make an unfounded accusation.

As a token of reviving spirit, and of the press recovering amid all the shackles attempted to be imposed on it, and that some are still willing to preserve the rights of free discussion, we give an extract from a prospectus of a new paper to be published in Cornwall, to be called the *Cornwall Advertiser*, or *West Briton*. The sentiments are deserving of approbation, as they show a right feeling, and revive the hope of just political opinions gradually making their way.

"Thus a light in feeble times,
Independence here shall reign,
On soon, it circling distant climes,
Shall here refulgent rise again."

"A Newspaper, entitled,
THE CORNWALL ADVERTISER,
"Prisca Jades"

"To THE PUBLIC.... The liberty of discussing public measures, and of pronouncing on the conduct of public men, is so essential to freedom itself, that, where this privilege does not exist, the government, whatever form it may assume, is substantially despotic; for, if the people are prevented from expressing their judgment respecting the wisdom and integrity of those who hold the helm of the state, the government is without controul, and the nation without redress. The press is justly considered the chief organ of this liberty, it is through this medium that information is circulated through the nation, and that public opinion, with gently swelling wave, rolls forward, until it reaches every corner of the land.

"To secure a medium for free and impartial discussion; to check whilst it is possible, the headlong torrent of public abuses; to recover, and transmit unimpaired to posterity that sacred constitution, so dearly purchased by our ancestors, to give to the inhabitants of this country an opportunity of expressing their unfettered opinion, and of judging fairly respecting the great question of parliamentary reform, without which every other species of civil reform is but a delusion, the friends of that great and necessary measure have determined to establish a News paper in Cornwall.

A meeting of the Catholics of Ireland was held on the 13th instant in

Dublin to consider of measures to take on the rejection of their petition. After warm debates on the eligibility of presenting another petition to parliament, a petition to the King, and an address to the British nation, a motion of adjournment to the first of November was carried.

The Orange processions on the 12th of this month have in some places been less numerously attended than in preceding years, and even some who were formerly foremost on those occasions have this year declined to form a part of so injudicious an exhibition. Such a return to sound policy is highly commendable, and it is hoped, that it may be considered as the forerunner of the general disuse of a practice, which tends to perpetuate dissension, and keep alive an injurious irritation of the public mind.

After so circumstantial a review of our domestic situation, an object to us of more immediate importance, a short account of the state of foreign powers may be sufficient.

Every motive of policy, and reciprocity of feeling should intimately connect us with the United States of North America. But this war which embitters every thing, and that mean jealousy which lurks in the minds of some against the Americans for throwing off the yoke of Britain, has misled our statesmen, and endangered our amicable relations with that country. Our claim to undisputed dominion by sea, and the equally absurd aggressions of France by land have distressed the Americans, and left them at a loss to which side to turn themselves. Their government, has not been fully supported in their plans by the people, and the influence of the popular voice on a free government, which even if occasionally in error, we ought to respect, has decided against the precautionary measures of an embargo, and non intercourse, which were adopted at first, and which perhaps were the wisest steps that could be taken to avoid open hostility, and keep out of the reach of the contending powers of Europe. For a view of the difficulties of the American government we refer to the addresses from New-York to the late

and present President, and their answers given among the documents at the conclusion of this article, and which our readers will find illustrative of the state of parties among them. We also insert in the same place, an answer from the house of representatives of Massachusetts to their governor, which forcibly shows the difficulties arising to the United States from the pressure of France on one hand, and of Great Britain on the other.

Commercial cupidity and a desire to sacrifice future safety and respectability to the prospect, probably delusive, of present gain, appear to have influenced the American people and caused them to lose the advantages they might have reaped from the enforcement of the embargo and non-intercourse; for had these measures been steadily and uniformly persevered in, the difficulties of these countries would probably have forced them to yield in just concession to the claims of Americans, for exactly at the critical period of the repeal of each of these measures, we were feeling the accumulated want of a supply of those articles which form the basis of our manufactures, and also of a market for our manufactured articles. The character of the American government has thus assumed the appearance of being vacillating and unsteady, and by such conduct the Americans have materially injured their cause and their reputation for political wisdom.

Bonaparte by one of those acts of power so common to conquerors, who are seldom restrained by justice, and who like Caesar blush for nothing "but an ill fought field," has annexed Holland to France. Probably the situation of Holland will not be made worse by this act of violence, nor are we likely to lose except so far as an increased energy of a new police under the more immediate direction of France, may render the introduction of our manufactures into the continent through Holland more difficult.

The continent of Europe lies prostrate at the feet of this mighty conqueror Austria, dazzled by the alliance with him, and associating our

of the Princesses of the house of Hapsburgh with the new dynasty of the Corsican soldier of fortune, who partakes of the common rise of all those called ancient families which by success have risen to eminence, and only appear great to us, as viewed through the vista of antiquity, waits with eager expectation to be allowed to share in the spoil of Turkey, now "nodding to its fall," and likely speedily to crumble by the weight of its cumbersome materials. Prussia in danger of being devoured by the lion when his appetite prompts him, remains in a nerveless and unprotected state, waiting the caprice of the conqueror. Sweden, internally convulsed, affords scenes of confusion and dark cabal, while Denmark irritated against England, from motives of resentment for the attack on her capital, and the capture of her fleet, lends unwilling assistance to further the views of France. The prudence of Denmark has appeared conspicuous through the dangers which have attended the warfare of twenty years, which has desolated Europe and so totally changed the state of the continent, or of what has been called the Western Family. Russia is at present drawn into the vortex of French politics, governed by the unsteady and imbecile Alexander, once gratuitously styled the unanimous ally of Britain. While Russia continues to act in servile dependence on France she may be permitted to retain her present show of power but her weakly governed and widely extended provinces are ill calculated to cope with the legions of France, when the deep policy of French intrigue shall place them again in opposition.

It remains to notice the peninsula of Spain and Portugal. Perhaps at the present moment the contest is decided, but if the issue is protracted, the event may speedily be expected. Great loss of treasure and a prodigal waste of human life, and the extremes of human sufferings have characterized the unavailing aid given by Britain on this occasion. Ferdinand, and things as they were, could not stand in competition with the physical force of the French, aided by the moral energy acquired by dexterously seek-

ng to blend with it the cause of reform, and the abolition of the inquisition, and all the other abuses of the old government.

English aid may not probably much longer retard the re union of Sicily with Naples. To prevent the fall of this branch of the house of Bourbon, the philanthropist can feel little interest, when he recollects the horrid barbarities practised by them a few years ago, when they vainly hoped they had regained their former power. The acts of cruelty then practised, sanctioned by the presence of a British fleet, were seldom equalled in the annals of civilized war, and with some other events of a similar nature, which have marked the last twenty years, raise strong doubts, as to allowing to this age the claim for civilization and refinement of which it boasts. The excesses of the French revolution are deservedly stigmatized, and are entitled to merited execration; but the acts of regular governments, are in many instances not less the objects of honest indignation and virtuous reprobation. In the page of impartial history both will descend with marked disapprobation to posterity, and show that Voltaire's allegory of the monkey and the tyger is not alone descriptive of French manners. Other nations must come in for their share of the unhappy mixture of frivolity and cruelty so deservedly lashed under this simile. This age produces a strange anomaly of civilization and barbarism.

Revolutionary movements are again apparent in some parts of South America, and the Caraccas make an effort for emancipation. Miranda has been for a long time sowing the seeds of revolution in his native country. Whether the inhabitants possess the energy, the perseverance, the coolness, the self denial, the willingness to bear privations, the fortitude, the courage, in short the virtues necessary to insure success to revolutions, is still problematical. Doubts arise and tend to moderate the cherishing of any very sanguine hopes. If they really possess sufficient powers of endurance within themselves, there is a danger of their plans being thwarted, by one or both of the belligerents of Europe, affecting as in the case of Spain and

Portugal to afford relief, but in reality seeking only selfishly to draw profit to themselves, and practising on the credulity of those who trust them. If the flame of revolution spreads to La Plata and Peru, the events at Buenos Ayres, will not tend to inspire confidence in the British name.

The old court of Portugal in their residence in Brazil do not appear to have gained wisdom by their misfortunes or transportation across the ocean. The same cabals, the same petty squabbles of a court, that hated to liberty, and a total ignorance of the true principles of trade, equally stamp their proceedings with folly, in their change of situation as characterized them in Portugal. The inhabitants of a court do not readily learn to profit by experience. They are too often only fit for the hospital of incurables, the mighty *Lazar house* which contains that great class of mankind who refuse all instruction.

India presents no subject of pleasing contemplation to the sagacious politician, who looks beyond the present moment. A discontented army, active and vigilant hordes waiting for an opportunity of annoyance fill up the back ground in India, while at home, a bankrupt company borrowing money to pay a high dividend, and by an appearance of fictitious wealth, adding to the general delusion as to the prosperity of the country at large, alarm and terrify the calm observers of passing events, who "from the loop holes of retreat," view the present shifting scenes, and give warning of approaching danger. But they like Cassandra have too generally the fate of being mocked for their pains, and giving their warnings in vain.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.

As descriptive of the Policy of the American Government in the present crisis, when they are assailed by the hostilities of the rival Powers of France and England, and their Counsels enfeebled by want of unanimity at home, and as illustrative of the State of Parties with them, which produces such a vacillation in their public acts, we present our Readers with the following

Addresses of the General Republican Committee of New York, in behalf, and by order of their constituents, to James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, the Pie-